THROUGH THE STAGE DOOR

AA 001 075 264 0
UC SOUTHERN REGIONAL LIBRARY FACILITY

BY

H·M·HYDE

38

64006

For George Warren
H M Hyde
Oct 3 - 1903

THROUGH THE STAGE DOOR

Stories of Actors and of Stage Life Behind the Scenes

BY

HENRY M. HYDE

Illustrated with Photographs from Life

Commercial Distributing Company
Opera House Block
Cairo, Illinois

COPYRIGHT, 1903, BY
H. R. SCHUTTER

The Publishers desire to acknowledge the courtesy of the "Chicago Tribune," in the columns of which paper these sketches were originally printed.

CONTENTS.

PAGE.

How Mansfield Played to an Audience of One 1

Henrietta Crosman's Hard Fight for Success 11

Superstitions of the Stage 22

Philosophy of Ezra Kendall 32

Adventures of the Theatrical Press Agent 48

How E. H. Sothern Rehearses Hamlet. 56

William Gillette—Playwright, Actor... 62

Duse, the Mysterious 72

William H. Crane Tells Stage Stories.. 82

A Chicago Tragedy of Hamlet 92

The Making of an Opera Star 103

The Handsomest Man on the Stage 113

How David Belasco Works and Lives.. 123

FOREWORD.

Stage life is interesting to most people who are not on the stage. That is the only reason for printing these sketches in book form. Written day by day for the columns of a newspaper they lack finish and exact accuracy.

If the stories told of actors are found to be "good stories", if they throw any light on that fascinating mystery which lies "behind the scenes," they have served their only purpose.

Unless they may also serve to show, for the benefit of "stage struck" young people, that the actor, like most other men, must as David Belasco says, "scratch his way through a mountain to success."

H. M. H.

RICHARD MANSFIELD.

HOW MANSFIELD PLAYED TO AN AUDIENCE OF ONE.

IT happened during one of the long runs of "Richard III," in New York. Richard Mansfield, who has been painted by sensational newspapers as an ogre and tyrant to the members of his company, was, of course, in the title role. The part of one of the little princes who go later to the tower—the Prince of Wales—was played by little Margery Stevens, a sweet little maid of thirteen.

Towards the close of the run little Margery was taken ill. Her mother was with her—children in the Mansfield company are always accompanied by their mothers, when they have mothers available. Margery was taken first from the theatrical boarding house where she had been living to a hospital. In the beginning it did not seem that her illness would be serious,

and as the last day of the engagement drew near the little girl was broken hearted at the thought of being left behind. So the terrible tyrant, who had been almost every day to see her since she had been out of the cast, arranged to have her travel with the company to Philadelphia. Incidentally he paid the hospital bill and the fees of the attending doctor.

When the Mansfield special reached Philadelphia Margery was taken directly to the Presbyterian hospital in that city. The doctors said that the trip had done her no harm. She was better off, in fact, than if she had been left behind in New York to worry and fret. Her mother went with her and was established in an adjoining room, where she could be near her little daughter.

In some strange way, which it is feared some people will never be able to understand, little Miss

Margery had formed a great attachment for Mr. Mansfield. Instead of cowering into a corner and trembling at sight of him—as we have been given to understand the women of his company are accustomed to do—little Margery greeted him always with a pathetic little smile. And he came to see her often, every day, in fact, during the stay in Philadelphia, until—but that is another story.

It is to be feared that Miss Margery was something of a hero worshiper, which—Emerson and Thomas Carlyle to the contrary notwithstanding—is something to be ashamed of. At any rate, when Mr. Mansfield came out to the hospital to call every morning she always brightened up and smiled and talked gayly with him. Sometimes, after consultation with the doctors, he brought some little trifle for her to eat. Always he told her how much better she was

looking and how hard it was to get along without her in the cast. Part of that was acting, of course, though the plot does not begin to thicken and the role get really difficult until later—the second and last act.

There seemed to be only one thing on little Margery's mind. Almost every day she spoke of it.

"I'm sure I'm not going to get well in time to see you in 'Beau Brummel,'" she said over and over again. "I wanted to see that more than anything else, and now I'm going to be disappointed."

Which was foolish of her, of course. But she was an actress, and only thirteen years old, so one can afford to be charitable.

"Why, Margery," said the man who is reported to pull handfuls of hair out of coiffures he thinks are too large, "you'll be well and strong in plenty of time to see 'Beau Brummel.' You're getting

along splendidly. You're looking much better than you did yesterday, my dear. Don't you worry about that. I'll promise you, on my word of honor, that you shall see 'Beau Brummel.' "

But that was before the brute saw and talked with the doctors who were attending the little girl.

"How soon will she be able to get about?" he asked.

The doctors shook their heads. It was worse than a critical case, they said. The little girl was down with her last illness.

"She'll never get up again," they said. "There isn't one chance in a million."

Whereupon the villian paid a second call the same day on the little girl and basely deceived her by declaring that she looked the picture of health and that, beyond the shadow of a doubt, she would be able to see 'Beau Brummel' on the first night of its production in

Philadelphia. Which was heartless, of course, for he knew positively at the time, that she would never get out of that little white room in the Presbyterian hospital.

The days wore along. They went fast for the actor, with all that burden of deceit on his mind. Every hour brought him nearer to the time when his duplicity must be exposed and another added to the long list of stories which circulate through the newspapers and reveal him in his true character.

For the little girl in the white hospital bed the days went slow. In spite of what Mr. Mansfield told her every morning when he called she seemed to have a sort of premonition that things were not going well with her. Perhaps she felt herself growing daily weaker. Perhaps she heard her mother sobbing softly to herself in the adjoining room after a consultation with the doctors. Almost every day she

would refer to Mansfield's promise that she should see him in "Beau Brummel."

"I know I won't, Mr. Mansfield," she would say. "See how thin and weak and how homely I'm getting. I won't be up in time, I'm sure I won't."

Then the villain would plunge headlong into a fresh tissue of lies.

"Margery," he would say, "I never in my life saw you looking so well. Just look at the roses in your cheeks," holding up a hand mirror, "and talk to me about looking thin and homely!" The roses were purely imaginary, but Margery, though she was but thirteen, was still a woman, and—however, nobody can attempt to defend a bare faced deception of that kind. A little photograph of Margery got itself printed, and that also was used to aid in the deceit. It really was a dreadful state of affairs. It should have been exposed long ago.

Finally the evening came on which "Beau Brummel" was to be presented. That morning Mr. Mansfield failed to call. Perhaps he realized that the day of reckoning had come and it was useless to try to keep up the game any longer. It was not a happy day for Margery. She lay and mourned all day at the loss of all her hopes.

Towards evening Mr. Mansfield came into the room, after Margery's mother had told her he was there and had propped her up in bed with a couple of pillows.

"Yes," the doctor had said, "you might as well. Nothing can make much difference now. Do it if you think it will give her any pleasure."

So Mansfield came in. It was a cold night out of doors and he wore a huge ulster which fell to his feet.

"Well, Margery," he said.

"And I'm not going to see 'Beau Brummel' after all," broke

out the little girl. "To-night's the night, and I'm too sick to get up at all. I knew I should be."

"But, Margery, I promised on my word of honor that you should see 'Beau Brummel.'"

"It's not your fault, Mr. Mansfield, that I should be so sick. You can't help that."

"Wait a minute, Margery," said the actor.

Mansfield's dresser came into the little room and took his great ulster and his hat and stick.

Before the wondering eyes of the sick child, propped up in bed, stood the great "Beau Brummel," lace handkerchief, tasseled cane, tortoise shell snuff box, silk stockings, and all.

From beginning to end the play was rehearsed, Mansfield in turn taking all the parts and telling the whole story. He finished just in time to drive back to the theatre and play the part before a crowded house.

Little Margery somehow forgave him for all the deception he had practiced on her. In fact, it did not seem to occur to her that she had been deceived or ill treated at all. She died before the Mansfield engagement in Philadelphia was over.

HENRIETTA CROSMAN'S HARD FIGHT FOR SUCCESS.

ONCE upon a time—which is always the polite way to speak of an incident in the career of an actress who is more than 20—once upon a time Miss Henrietta Crosman—and that was her real name before she married—was called upon to decide between painting plaques and playing parts on the stage. The daubing of red roses and scarlet sumac bunches on china plates was a bird in the hand that was laying golden eggs of such size and number that it seemed almost foolish to give it up for the bird in the stage bush—though the latter wore more glittering plumage.

It happened this way:

Miss Crosman's father was Maj. Crosman, U. S. A. (retired). His daughter was 15, and large for her age. She had talent in two direc-

tions; she could paint pretty pictures and she had a fine, high soprano voice. So the first choice was between Art and Music.

The major and her mother and all the rest of the family favored Art. The girl herself thought she would rather sing in grand opera than decorate any number of china tea sets. So the whole family pulled up stakes and departed for Paris on the major's half pay. There a famous teacher of vocal music put Henrietta's voice to the test, and, declaring that the question of his possible fees cut no figure in his decision, announced that she was the future Patti. So they all settled down in a French pension —which is a word you use when you want to show that you have been to Europe, and means boarding house—and Henrietta went to school to the singing master.

After a year's study arrangements were made for her operatic debut.

A week before the date set Miss Crosman caught a bad cold. The singing master kept right on forcing her to sing, and a day or two before she was to burst upon an astonished world her voice broke down. Eminent throat specialists were called in. They did no good. The operatic career had to be abandoned. What might have been, except for that cold, is still a something that Miss Crosman doesn't like to be reminded of.

Then, still on the major's half pay, which the singing masters and the throat specialists and the pension had badly strained, the Crosman family moved back to Youngstown, O.

In addition to teaching her how to use her voice, the singing master had taught the 16 year old Henrietta something about acting. So, when Youngstown began to pall after Paris, she decided she would try her talent on the dramatic stage.

And, finally, she got an offer of an engagement with a little company over at Pittsburg.

The only thing that stood in the way of an acceptance was the lack of money to buy railroad tickets and costumes, and to pay board while the play was in rehearsal. And then Miss Crosman got busy with her brush. That was the china painting age, when all over the country the disease was spreading, and Miss Crosman took advantage of it. She decorated defenseless plaques and cream pitchers and sent them to be sold to Philadelphia, Pittsburg, and other art centers. What is more to the point, they did sell, and the demand was so great that within a comparatively few weeks the young artist had taken in enough money to pay her railroad fare, buy her costumes, and provide for her board while the play was under rehearsal.

Then came the crisis. The plaque

painting game was such a profitable one that it seemed a shame to give it up for an uncertainty. But the choice was made and Miss Crosman went to Pittsburg and the stage. Her success was almost immediate, and it was great. From Bartley Campbell's "White Slave" company she went to Daly's, where she played for the greater part of one season. Then Daniel Frohman employed her to play good parts with his Lyceum company in such plays as "The Wife." The next season Daniel loaned the services of Miss Crosman to Brother Charles, who wanted her to be leading lady in "Charles Frohman's Comedians." In those days both the Lyceum and the Comedians were at the height of their fame, and Henrietta Crosman made a great hit in such plays as "Gloriana." Her name then was almost as well known on Broadway as it is now.

But Miss Crosman fell ill. For a season or two she was not able to appear in any production, and when she finally recovered her health she found—what many an actor and actress have since found—that the theatre-going public had forgotton even her name. She had hard work to get an engagement of any kind. Again the stock company of Pittsburg opened its doors to her. Then she went to Denver, where she still was playing in stock. But by this time she had married Maurice Campbell, who is still her husband and manager. She had already read and been greatly taken with "Mistress Nell," George Hazleton's play, and the firm of Crosman & Campbell—wife and husband—was saving up money for its production.

Finally they got together enough coin to make a modest little production. They were booking then through the theatrical trust.

HENRIETTA CROSMAN.

SEE PAGE 11

The production was a go. It made money from the start and most of the money was put right back again into the show—better actors were employed and better scenery was painted.

And then, when the Crosman company was over in Canada, the trust decided that it couldn't do any more business with Campbell and his star wife. Campbell had something like $500 in cash and engagements for a couple of weeks ahead of him. He was notified of the decision of the trust one afternoon in New York and he was walking up Broadway the same afternoon white in the face and decidedly down in the mouth.

Happily—some people would say providentially—he ran into one of the Stires brothers, who controlled the Bijou theatre. Mr. Stires was also "up against it." His current production was "a frost." For all that he could see his house would

"have to be dark" for a couple of weeks. Campbell told his troubles to Stires and Stires was equally eloquent in return. So "Mistress Nell" came to the Bijou and made a lot of money. All the New York dramatic critics came and saw and almost all had forgotton—if they ever knew—that the new star was really an old New York favorite.

Mrs. Campbell is distinctly a woman's woman. One of her strongest passions is ice cream soda. She is also fond of chocolate creams and she is on record as publicly declaring that she much prefers to play to an audience of women. They understand more quickly and are more sympathetic and appreciative, Mrs. Campbell thinks.

But her attitude towards her own sex has got Mrs. Campbell into more or less serious trouble, or, at least, annoyance. In the Christmas number of one of the theatrical weeklies she wrote a signed article

setting forth her views on the stage as a career for young women.

"Why," asked Mrs. Campbell, "should people refer to a young woman as 'stage struck'? If she wants to be a trained nurse they don't call her 'nurse struck.' If she decides to be a painter they do not call her as 'palette struck.' 'Stage struck' is an insult to the profession. In my opinion no career offers as great opportunities and as great rewards to a young woman as that of an actress—always providing that she has talent."

Mrs. Campbell went on to say that, in her opinion, young women of character and real talent should be encouraged to go on the stage. The stage needs them and it will reward them well, if they have ability and are willing to work hard.

The result of that article has been that wherever Henrietta Crosman has appeared since every "stage

struck'' young woman who has heard of her attitude and views has first written and then tried to see her.

If she attempted to see half of the dramatic aspirants who are anxious to meet her she would have no time to do anything else.

Mrs. Campbell has two sons. One of them is at school in New York. The other is a little chap of 4 or 5, who usually travels with his mother under the charge of a nurse.

She is a domestic woman, so far as the necessities of her profession will permit her to be. Never once during her stage career has she ever taken part in one of those after-the-show suppers which are so popular in and out of the profession. When the last curtain has gone down she usually is joined by her husband and one or two members of her executive staff. More often than not she will not take her carriage home, but will walk, if the distance is not too great,

stopping, perhaps, to drink a glass of her beloved ice cream soda on the way. Her afternoons she devotes largely to her son or to reading one of the many manuscripts which are submitted to her. Mrs. Campbell does not believe that an actress can do justice to her art and at the same time devote much time to society.

SUPERSTITIONS OF THE STAGE.

O, I have no patience with the people who are superstitious about everything they see and meet. There's no reason in the word why actors should be any more superstitious than any other class of people. As for me, I have no more fear of—. For heaven's sake, Jim, don't walk under that ladder!''

That bit of quotation from a conversation between two actors fairly represents the attitude of the stronger minded members of the theatrical profession towards the multitudinous superstitions which rule the stage. As for the average actor, he is probably the most superstitious person in the world. There are a large number of superstitions which are generally believed in. In addition almost every actor and actress has a lot of individual superstitions of his own.

Peacock's feathers are always terribly unlucky about a theater. Even a picture of a peacock's feather is enough to ruin the chances of a play of an actor. It would be hard to convince any member of the theatrical profession that the real cause of the failure of the Lincoln theater, in Chicago, was not the fact that in the frieze which ran about the inside of the house peacock's feathers formed one of the chief factors.

One of the features of the act of the Powers brothers in vaudeville was the blowing into the air of a peacock's feather, which was finally allowed to descend and balance on the nose of the performer. When the Trocadero theatre was first opened the Powers brothers were on the bill. The manager of the house came to a rehearsal and saw the peacock's feather blown up into the air. Immediately he gave a shriek of horror and grabbed the

performer by the arm. "Heavens," he said, "do you want to queer the show? Cut out that hoodoo." And the feather of ill omen was cut out.

Cats about a theatre are good luck. If you meet a black cat on the street on the way to an opening performance you need have no further fear. The piece will make a great hit. Almost every theater in town harbors a pet cat, and it is almost a matter of religion with all theatrical people never to interfere with its pleasure in any way. Often when grand opera is on at the Auditorium the theatre cat will take a notion to walk across the stage in the middle of the scene. But neither Melba nor De Reszke would venture for anything to stop it, nor would they allow a stage hand to interfere. To interfere with a cat would be almost fatal. Everybody who knows anything knows that! A little one eyed gray cat makes its

home back of the stage at the Chicago opera house. The vaudeville performers are simply delighted if it takes a notion to come downstairs under the stage and visit them in their dressing rooms. If it condescends to go to sleep on the clothes in their open trunks they are tickled half to death. That means a long and steady run of good luck. Foolish? Why, it never fails. They will quote you a string of instances as long as your arm. Suppose the cat happens to go to sleep on the costume you wear in your next appearance. Wake it up? Not for the world. Put on some other clothes, but do not disturb the cat. More than once a soubrette has gone on in the wrong costume rather than rouse the cat from its slumbers.

On the other hand, you must never carry a cat with you on the road. Traveling cats are not only not harbingers of good luck, but

instances have been known where—.

When a player on his way to the theater to appear in a first performance of a new play meets a cross eyed man he might as well go back home and give it up. He is certainly doomed to failure. It never fails. Of course, he should also, as soon as he sees the cross eyed person, cross the forefinger and the middle finger of his right hand and spit over them. That may help some, but of course it won't take the curse off altogether. Nothing will do that.

Some extremely good actresses and actors are looked upon as Jonahs by theatrical managers. Sometimes such unfortunate people have happened to be connected with a number of unsuccessful productions. Sometimes there is not even that much foundation for the reputation they possess. But once an actor becomes tainted with the hoodoo or Jonah superstition he

had better quit the business at once, for he will find it practically impossible to get an engagement.

"Well," you will hear one manager saying to another who has just put on an unsuccessful production, "well, you might have known it! Didn't you know better than to take —— —— out with you?"

They are talking in dead seriousness, too.

Certain plays share with certain actors the reputation of ill omen. There are half a dozen pieces which competent judges pronounce extremely strong which no manager will touch because of it.

It would be unfair to mention the names of any of these hoodoo players, though some of them would be quite familiar to the public.

Actors share with the rest of the world all the common Friday, thirteen, and umbrella superstitions. But they go further than most people in the umbrella line.

Down at the Coliseum gardens there were several huge Japanese umbrellas used in the decorations. One day one of the performers—a Frenchman, by the way, as if to show that superstitions are international—came to Manager Wood in great distress.

"It has rained every day since I've been here," he said, "and it'll keep on raining just so long as you keep those open umbrellas in the house. Take 'em out quick before you hoodoo the weather for all summer."

When an actor gets home, no matter how hard it has been raining, he must never open his umbrella to let it dry off. That would be deadly. Nor must he lay it on the bed, even unopened. That signifies something terrible.

Even the unsentimental men who handle the business end of traveling companies have t heir superstitions. Always when the doors are

open in a small town the men with the passes are first in line. But they are never allowed to go in till there is some money in the house. If a single deadhead goes in ahead of the people who have bought their tickets on the opening night of a new production the piece is foredoomed to financial failure.

When your train is pulling into a town where you are to show and you see a graveyard on the left hand side of the train you will play to bad business. If the graveyard is on the other side of the track it don't signify anything in particular. Of course if it is on the left hand side and you don't see it the sign amounts to nothing, so it is wise as you run into a town to look out of the right hand window or keep your eyes inside the car.

If, when you are setting up the canvas on a lot for a circus, a yellow cur dog appears and hangs around you'll have doggoned bad

luck. Try it and see if that isn't good doctrine.

You musn't whistle in a stage dressing room. You may be a good whistler, with a cheerful tune, but the first note is likely to drive every other actor out into the night. There are few better ways to Jonah an act.

Some actors insist that all their stage shoes must be kept on the floor. If they were put on a table or in a cupboard it would ruin them. But in some theaters keeping shoes on the floor is almost as bad, for rats like leather and many a good pair of shoes has been ruined by them.

Almost every player has some little piece of jewelry or wearing apparel which is his or her mascot. Some people are superstitious about an old wig band and will use it again and again, having repeated new wigs attached to the same old band. One actress at the Illinois

theatre, in Chicago, was recently discovered in tears because something had become of her old hare's foot with which she applied rouge to her cheeks.

Here are some more bad luck signs: A yellow clarionet in the orchestra; to pass through a funeral; to pass another actor on the stairs; to speak the "tag"—that is the last line of a play—at a rehearsal; to look through the hole in the curtain to count up the house.

And after all is there anybody in any line of business who has not a lot of pet little superstitions of his own?

PHILOSOPHY OF EZRA KENDALL.

UNTIL he recently started out to star in "The Vinegar Buyer" Ezra Kendall was the most popular and the highest paid monologue artist on the vaudeville stage. Managers were glad to pay him $500 a week for twenty minutes of talk twice a day. Twenty years ago he was working as hostler in a country livery stable at $15 a month. Here is his own story:

"I was stranded at a little hotel at Portlandsville, N. Y. The landlord of the hotel was Ira Stevens. Ira and I were great friends. He stuck close to me, because he was afraid if he didn't I might jump my board bill. Finally he and I struck a great idea.

"Portlandsville is in the center of the hop country. They grow nothing up there but hops and politicians. When the hops get ripe

EZRA KENDALL.

they have to be picked in a hurry. Ten days is the limit. So the hop growers go down to New York and to all the cities roundabout and hire every man they can find to pick hops. In the hop picking season whole trainloads of hobos are run into that country, and every house is filled.

"Well, Ira and I conceived the idea that if we would bring a show up there and play through the hop country in the hop picking season we'd make our everlasting fortunes. Ira trusted me for my board bill and I went down to the city and organized the company. It consisted of five people. We billed it as "The Criterion Comedy Company—Four Distinct Entertainments in One—Variety, Comedy, Minstrelsy, and Drama'—and there were five of us to carry out the program. One and a quarter people to each of the four distinct varieties. Ira furnished an old bus for

the transportation of the company from one little town to the next, and an even older wagon in which our alleged baggage was carried. But after two weeks our scheme proved a failure. We found that after working hard in the fields all day the hop pickers preferred to go to a dance, if they went anywhere except to bed.

"I've got enough of the show business,' said Ira at the end of the second week; 'here's where I quit.'

"That left me to get along as well as I could. We had a date at Lawrence, N. Y., and Ira finally agreed to drive us over there. The hall where we were to show was over the hotel. When we drove up to the hotel there wasn't a human being in sight. Not a soul in the hotel office or on the streets. We thought we had struck the deserted village for a fact. Pretty soon in ran a man in his shirt sleeves, all out of breath and covered with mud.

"'They've got him,' said he to me.

"'Have they?' I asked. 'Where did they catch him?'

"'Well,' said the stranger, 'they chased him down Main street and through Hen Waller's wood lot into the barn. Then out of the barn and over to the Widow Harlan's turnip field. He scart the Bellows children half to death and they finally ketched him down by his own house. His wife grabbed hold of his coattail and held on tell the sheriff come up.'

"'Did he put up a fight?' I says.

"'No,' says my friend. 'Bill's harmless, I guess. He just grinned at the sheriff and says, "Well, boys, I hope you had as much fun as I did."'

"'Did they find the goods on him?' I asked.

"'Huh?' says the stranger. 'The goods? Bill's no thief. He's just touched in the head. Yesterday he

escaped from the asylum and come over here to home and we all have been out to catch him.'

"In a few minutes the sheriff and Bill came into the hotel, with about 200 people after them. Practically every inhabitant of the village was in the crowd and Bill was laughing and joking with them all.

"Pretty soon it got time for us to open our show upstairs. We strung the cambric curtain, lit the kerosene lamps, and sat the little table for the ticket seller near the door. But nobody came up and bought tickets. The presence of the captured Bill down in the hotel office was a bigger show than ours. Finally I was seized with a brilliant idea. I went down stairs and invited Bill and the sheriff who had him in charge to come up and attend our show free of charge. That struck both Bill and the sheriff as a fine plan, so they came up, and almost everybody in town tagged up

after them. Of course, we charged everybody but the two chief personages a quarter apiece to get in and we managed to work up a $15 house, which was mighty good for those days.

"But our audience hardly glanced at the stage. They all looked at Bill. Bill may have been crazy, but he laughed at all the right places in the show, and whenever he would laugh all the rest of them would shake their heads and say, 'Poor Bill! Ain't it too bad he's crazy?'

"Finally, at the end of September, our tour came to a necessary end. I had just money enough to pay railroad fares for four people from the little town we were at down to Portlandsville, ten miles away. The train left for Portlandsville at noon, and I had just time to drive down to Portlandsville and borrow some money from my old friend, Ira Stevens, proprietor of the hotel. With that money I planned

to buy tickets for the five of us and meet the other four at the station when the train pulled into Portlandsville. The road were bad and we had to drive slow. Just as we drove into Portlandsville I heard the train whistle. I saw I hadn't time to see Ira and get the tickets in time to catch the train. So I drove straight to the station. I knew the ticket agent and he and I were quite friendly. I drove up there on a gallop just as the train pulled in, and said: 'Here, Andy, give me two tickets for Albany and two to New York. I'm not going and I'll see you after the train pulls out.'

"He handed over the tickets and I gave them to the other four members of the Criterion company through the car windows just as the wheels started again. Then I turned to Andy, the ticket agent. 'Andy,' I said, 'I'm going up street now to borrow some money from Ira Stevens, and then I'll be down

and pay you.' 'Ira Stevens!' said the agent, with a gasp. 'Why, Ira isn't in town. He went away last week and he isn't expected back for two months yet.'

"Well, there I was. The train was already out of sight, with the four people for whom I had 'stood off' the station agent for tickets safely on board. There was no way to get the tickets back—that was certain. And if, as the station agent said, my friend Ira Stevens, the hotel keeper, from whom I expected to borrow the money for the tickets was out of town for two months, I was certainly up against it. And so, to an even greater extent, was the station agent. He had trusted me for $15 worth of railroad tickets, for which he would have to pay, if I did not find the money, and $15 was a lot of money for either of us to lose.

"'Never mind,' I said to the white faced station agent, "I'll get

that money somehow and I'll pay you the $15. You just wait and see.'

"Poor fellow. There was nothing else for him to do, so he waited. I drove up to friend Ira's little two-storied frame hotel, and found that though Ira was not in town the situation was not quite as bad as the station agent had pictured it. Ira would be back in a couple of days. So I did a little waiting—at Ira's expense. When he got off the train and walked over to the hotel a few days later I met him at the door and told him my tale of woe.

" 'No,' said Ira, in a way I have always thought was unnecessarily rough and brutal, 'I'll not lend you a cent—not a penny. I should think you'd know I had had my fill of the show business.'

" 'Gee,' I said, 'I've got to get that money somewhere.'

" 'Well, go and get it, then,' Ira said, with a brutal chuckle. 'Only

you can't work me for it.' That gave me an idea.

"'Ira,' I said, 'if I can't work you, perhaps I can work for you. Give me a job. I've got to get that money or the New York Central'll go into bankruptcy.'

"Ira said that was more like it. He wanted a bartender and he wanted a hostler to take charge of the hotel stable. Both positions were open and he offered me my choice of them. It was bar or barn, and I chose the stable. The salary, I may remark in passing, was the same for both positions—$15 a month.

"I went down and explained the situation to the station agent and assured him I'd pay him his money out of the first wages I got. That relieved the tension some, but the next few weeks that ticket agent was around every morning to call the roll and see that I was still present.

"I worked in that barn, taking care of the horses, for two full months, during which time I earned $30 in wages and as much more in tips and in the receipts from a raffle I organized to determine which resident of Portlandsville should become the possessor of a large and more or less valuable diamond stud which was left over from my more prosperous days.

"I have always liked to work around horses, and so I enjoyed that job as hostler, but I got a lot more than enjoyment out of it. There was an old fellow named 'Nelse' Curry, a horse doctor, in the town, who was one of the most original characters I ever met. He called himself Mulo Medicus on his business cards, and, you remember, I used that title later in 'We, Us & Co.'

"Nelse would never admit that he didn't know all about anything that was being discussed. For

instance, one day I was treating a saddle gall on one of the horses in the hotel barn.

"'What you doin'?' asked Nelse.

"'Cauterizing the wound with carbolic acid,' I said.

"'That's right,' answered Nelse. 'Croticise 'er three times a day with that there bibolic acid and you'll come out O. K.'

"I cultivated Nelse and some more queer old pods who hung around the stable, as they always do in a small town, and when, after a couple of months, I got ready to go back to New York, I had a couple of books full of notes on their peculiarities of dress, habits, and language.

"When I got to New York I was pretty nearly broke again, and I had hard sledding for a few weeks. Just before the holidays I got an engagement with the 'Wanted—A Partner' company. I was engaged to play the part of a countryman.

It was an entirely new role to me, but I was fresh from my course of study in the barn at Portlandsville and thought I could put what I had learned to good use. I made an impression as a countryman, so much of an impression that W. A. Mestayer came to me and engaged me for a term of three years to play that line of parts with his company. Mestayer had had a play engaged for the next season, but, for some reason, it failed to materialize. He had, in some way, got a good impression of my abilities, so, after his playwright had disappointed him, he came to me and asked me if I thought I could turn out something in the play line for him.

"'I want to have some fun with Hot Springs, Ark., in one act,' he said, 'and I've bought the idea of a revolving hotel from Bernard for another act,' he said. 'And that's as far as I've got.' I thought of old Nelse Curry up at Portlandsville

and it seemed to me he would make a good character. So I told Mestayer to give me his material and I'd see what I could do. I went up in the country and worked out 'We, Us & Co.' In that play, which from a financial standpoint was highly successful, my old friend Nelse, under his self-given title of Mulo Medicus, was one of the leading characters, and I drew liberally on my Portlandsville experience in many other ways.

"When we played 'We, Us & Co.' at Albany there was a special train run down from the Portlandsville country and 'Doc' Nelson Curry was on it. He sat in a front seat and laughed as heartily as anybody at his own antics on the stage.

"'We, Us & Co.' cleared up $60,000 for Mr. Mestayer. And if the story I have told—or any one of them—has any point, it is that often adversity is a blessing in disguise. I thought, for instance, that

the two months I spent in that hotel barn was a season of mighty hard luck, but as a matter of fact it was the making of me in my profession. There is nothing which can happen to a man out of which he cannot get a lot of good. I was paid only $15 a month for working in the stable, but the material I got there was worth $60,000 to Mr. Mestayer.

"I don't believe that often—if ever—a really good character or situation is evolved out of an author's imagination. Almost invariably the best of them at least are studied from life.

"My present play, 'The Vinegar Buyer,' is based on James Whitcomb Riley's poem of 'Jap Miller.' I had been trying for a long time to get Mr. Riley to write me a play. I made several trips to Indianapolis to see him. Always he declared that he didn't think he could write a play. I offered him $5,000 cash down as an advance if he would

sign a contract to prepare a play for me and a further guarantee that his royalties would amount to $15,000 or more within two years. But not even that tempted Riley in the least.

"'I can't write a play, Mr. Kendall,' he said, 'and I'm not going to try.'

"So we fell to talking about some of the curious old Indiana characters he has celebrated.

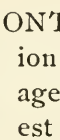
"'Did you ever read my poem of "Jap Miller"?' he asked.

"I never had, though I was familiar with almost everything he had written. I found the poem extremely suggestive, and told Mr. Riley so. He went on to elaborate on the character, and in a few minutes I broke in on him:

"'Mr. Riley,' I said, 'you are writing a play this minute, without knowing it.'

"So that's the way 'The Vinegar Buyer' came into being."

ADVENTURES OF THE THEATRICAL PRESS AGENT.



ONTRARY to public opinion the theatrical press agent is personally a modest man. He is willing to go to almost any length in exploiting the actress or actor he represents, but when it comes to personal publicity he becomes a sensitive plant—a shrinking wood violet. He will talk? Yes. But it must be behind the screen of anonymity.

In the old days the work of the theatrical press agent was to call on the editor of the country paper and invite him out to take a drink or several drinks—the more the better. Incidentally, he was expected to tell how his star had just got a divorce from her husband, or, if he represented a masculine star, how his principal was involved in as many scandals as

MRS. "PAT" CAMPBELL.

SEE PAGE 53.

possible. If he was a particularly ingenious press agent he told how the actress had just had a lot of non-existent diamonds stolen.

Now all this is changed. Even the title has been given up. The man who now looks after the press work for a big theatrical production is called the business manager, not because he has much to do with the business management, but for the reason that with the increased dignity of the profession has come a disinclination to even suggest that they are in any way dependent on the gullibility of press or public.

And, as a matter of fact, it is an axiom in the show business that no matter how ingenious the press agent may be it is altogether impossible for him to boom a bad star or a poor play into lasting popularity. Clever press work may, and often does, greatly help a good but obscure player, but it never yet made a permanent success of an

incompetent. In theatrical press work as in all other forms of advertising publicity amounts to nothing unless you can really "deliver the goods."

Nowadays a press agent's value depends not so much on his ingenuity as on his good judgment. Plenty of things which the newspapers are glad to print do much more harm than good to a theatrical enterprise. For instance:

A few years ago the Victoria theater, now the New American, opened on North Clark street, in Chicago. A new hand was hired as press agent and was urged by the management to get up a sensation which the newspapers would print the morning after the opening. It happened that what the press agent considered a good sensation actually occurred the day before the opening. The leading woman of the company was traveling on a railroad train through Iowa on her way

to open the Victoria. In the car with her three people were discovered who had well developed cases of smallpox. Everybody in the car was captured at a station just across the Mississippi and taken to a pesthouse. The leading woman climbed out of a window, walked for five miles through the woods, and caught a train which brought her to Chicago in time to make her appearance, as announced. She had not even been vaccinated or disinfected.

The leading woman told her story to the new press agent. It struck him as "a corking good story." He got the picture of the leading woman and a vivid interview with her, describing the horrors of the pesthouse from which she had escaped. Every paper in Chicago printed something about it and the new press agent imagined that his fortune was made. He went to the manager's office early the morning

the stories were printed. He thought the manager would meet him with open arms and probably at least hint at a raise in his salary. On the contrary, he was met with a cold and formal letter informing him that his services were no longer needed. He knows better now.

As an example of the microscopic pains which are taken to avoid alarming the patrons of a theater in this way the following incident is told:

When Miss Julia Marlowe was playing in New York during a small-pox scare there, the danger of contracting the disease was minified by the newspapers, but the great theater going public was quite badly frightened. When the scare was at its height the manager of the company, whose business it is to keep in close touch with public sentiment, went to Miss Marlowe and asked her to temporarily cut one line from the play. When the

reasons for the request were given to her she complied at once. This was the line which was elided:

"Does he think he'll get the plague from me?"

"There isn't any use in even running a chance of suggesting an unpleasant thought to the public," said the wise manager, and Miss Marlowe agreed with him.

Among the press agents of the present day in the United States the leader is probably a keen and ingenious person who rejoices in the unusual name of A. Toxin Worm. To the profession Herr Worm—for he is by birth a German—is known as Anti-Toxin Worm. It was he who was responsible for the unique press work which put the name of Mrs. "Pat" Campbell in the mouths of everybody during her recent visit to America. He was quick to see the possibilities of Mrs. Campbell's little pet dog. Hundreds of other actresses have

had pets quite as interesting, but certainly no other dog was so quickly made historic as was Pinky Panky Po. Even in coining a name for the miserable little beast Herr Worm showed positive genius. It was Worm also who, when his star was playing at the Republic theater, in New York, had load after load of tanbark dumped on the streets surrounding the building, and then, when the work was done, quietly disappeared. Forthwith came the dramatic reporters inquiring anxiously the reason for this strange proceeding. Each of them was referred to Mr. Worm. Mr. Worm was hard to find. Once found, he was reluctant to "give up." Finally he told the story. Mrs. Campbell was extremely nervous. The noise on the streets annoyed her greatly. He had had the tanbark put down so that she might not be disturbed while acting. Newspapers all over the coun-

try printed stories about it. Mr. Worm also ingeniously invented the tales about Mrs. Pat's enormous winning at bridge whist. He was shrewd enough to see that a story of that class would interest a large class of people.

But the press agent must see to it that he does not "overplay his star." It is easy to give him or her too much publicity of a sensational kind. At once the line of safety is passed the effect is deadly. It is said that no less a personage than Richard Mansfield, entirely without his wish, has had so much notoriety of this kind that the reaction is being felt at the box office. The public has read so many tales about the great actor's ungovernable temper that it has got tired of it all.

HOW E. H. SOTHERN REHEARSES HAMLET.

IN the first place, Mr. Edward H. Sothern takes himself and his art seriously—even at a rehearsal. And when Hamlet is the subject of a rehearsal it is easy to see how any lightness might kill the whole tragic effect.

The curtain was down at Powers' theater, to stop the draft on the stage, and behind it the men and women who are to present the tragedy were busy, in their street clothes, going through the duel scene.

King Claudius held his regal state sitting on a kitchen chair and distinguished from the other players by the golden, gem set crown that looked sadly out of place in connection with a standing linen collar and a sack suit of clothes. Out in front, close to the blank curtain, stood young Hamlet and Laertes—

Mr. Sothern and the other player —both in dark, short coats. Out to them tripped the young Osric, swaggering with his arms full of foils. Strangely looked the young blade, cavorting in trousers and jacket.

"Set me the stoups of wine upon that table," orders the king, rising in majestic poise on his pine board throne.

The page—a most modern young woman in a street dress—bows low as she fills and presents the golden bowl.

Then the duelists fall to.

"No," says Sothern to Laertes, "on the second stroke you must aim higher. Else I cannot touch you with my foil naturally."

They go through it again. Suddenly Sothern stops and looks around him. All about the edge of the stage are sitting the soldiers and the women who were to come on later. Some of them had on their

overcoats and wraps. They were gathered into little groups and were whispering softly among themselves.

"I must ask," said Hamlet, becoming suddenly E. H. Sothern and much in earnest in that part, "I must ask that the whispering stop. You can't have anything important to say that can't wait. If you have, go out of the theater or down stairs, or anywhere, and say it. Then come back. But we can't rehearse with that 's-s-s-s-s-s' sounding in our ears all the time. It gets on a man's nerves; it takes him out of the part he is trying to play; it is simply damnable. I don't want to be aggravating about it, but I won't have it."

Thereafter the lofty lines rang out in utter silence; not a sound broke into the solemn scene when the queen drank the poisoned cup; the dying Laertes told his tale of treachery to a hushed house and the

audience of one, sitting up in the flies, out of sight, was thrilled with the tragedy of it all, forgetting coats, trousers, and tailor made gowns and the total lack of courtly surroundings.

"I make it a rule," said Mr. Sothern, "not to allow spectators at my rehearsals. The presence of a critic or two sitting down in front in an otherwise empty house has a bad effect on every actor. It takes him outside his part and makes him self-conscious. He feels that he has not yet perfected his work and he is wondering, as he reads his lines, what so-and-so out there in front thinks of it. You can't get a man's best efforts—you can't get him to throw his whole soul into the work of rehearsal—when he knows he is being watched. Unconsciously he resents the idea of being inspected and criticised before he has reached, as nearly as he can, the stage of perfection.

"It's the same way with a painter. I studied art in my early days and I know what the effect was when a casual visitor to the gallery where I was copying a picture stopped and looked at my uncompleted sketch. It simply threw me out of the spirit of the thing and often I would fail to get the effect I was aiming at until another day.

"For the same reason I am accustomed to rehearse my own parts all alone in an empty theater, after audience, company, and stage hands have all gone home for the night. There is something inspiring and compelling to me in the very emptiness of a great theater, just as there is the emptiness of a great cathedral. And I can give myself to the work of expressing the thought of the dramatist at such a time without reserve and without any feeling that I am being watched and criticised. Another reason why I think it best not to allow specta-

tors at rehearsals is that it is sometimes necessary for a producing star to make suggestions to the members of his company; sometimes, in the heat of the moment, he may even grow a bit sarcastic and rebuke one member or another for some unnecessary lapse. And the actor, being a grownup man, does not at all enjoy being rebuked in the presence of other people."

WILLIAM GILLETTE—PLAYWRIGHT, ACTOR.

LAST season for more than one hundred consecutive nights there were no less than sixteen different actors playing the part of "Sherlock Holmes" in different parts of the world, with William Gillette, author of the play and creator of the part, serving as model for them all.

There were five companies playing in England, two in the United States, two in Australia, two in South Africa, and one each in Copenhagen, Amsterdam, Buda-Pesth, Moscow, Brussels, and the country districts of Belgium. It is stated that so far as the number of different companies which are producing it at the same time is concerned "Sherlock Holmes" has broken all previous records, the best heretofore being that of

"Pinafore," which was presented by twelve companies at the same time.

Each of the actors who is presenting the character of the detective had the advantage of studying Mr. Gillette in the part during his long stay in London. Most of them imitate him in makeup and methods, and, whether it is produced in Rus ian, in French, in Danish, in German, or in Norwegian, the spell of the tense situations of the play holds the audience as closely as it does in English with its creator in the title role.

Sherlock has not yet been presented either in France or Germany, but will be during the next year or two. In France before a foreign play can be presented it is necessary to employ a recognized member of the society of dramatic authors to make the translation and "stand for" the production.

To him a certain amount of cash must be paid in the way of royalties, and there are many other technicalities to be complied with which make it necessary, or at least advisable, for the principal to be on the ground.

Everywhere he goes Mr. Gillette takes with him his little working table on which his plays are written. He usually has something new under way and spends a part of many days, en route, at his literary work.

The table itself resembles nothing so much as one of the old fashioned sewing tables with folding legs. Every morning his Japanese valet covers the top of the table with a fresh sheet of clean white paper, fastened with thumb tacks underneath the top. There is also laid out daily a fresh supply of clean steel pens, blotters, and paper. Unless when he sits down everything about the work-

E. H. SOTHERN.

SEE PAGE 56

ing table is fresh and spotless the actor-author finds it hard to do his work.

Nowadays Gillette does not often get back to his little place in South Carolina—"The Thousand Pines"—which he built on the top of a mountain fourteen miles from a railroad. That little place was built when the world looked dark to him. He had, shortly before, collaborated over the writing of a play which was a complete failure—the only failure he has made in the play line—and family bereavements had completely crushed him. He went down into the wilderness of the South Carolina mountain country and built the bungalow with the idea of spending the remainder of his life there as a hermit. Certainly no spot could be more perfectly adapted for that method of life. The only neighbors which "The Thousand Pines" can boast of are most of them engaged in the

manufacture of illicit whisky. Gillette made friends with many of them and added to his knowledge of human nature that of this strange and remarkable type. While he lived at "The Thousand Pines" Gillette did his own cooking, and his chief amusement was to walk ten miles over the mountains to the nearest village, where a couple of hundred mountaineers made their homes. He staid in the mountain fastness long enough to fight out the battle with himself and he emerged strengthened and invigorated in every way.

Long before he became an actor his desire to study and to know human nature in all its types led him to undertake even stranger journeys and more startling changes of character. The story of how, during one of his long vacations from college, he went out west and got a job as an apprentice in a machine shop, so that he might

study the workingman at first hand, is familiar. Most people know also that the house of his father in Hartford, Conn., is next door to the old home of Mark Twain, and that the humorist put Gillette on the stage as a member of the stock company at the Boston museum. Now Twain declares that the joke he thought he was putting up on Gillette is about the only one he ever tried that didn't come out the way he expected.

But there is one of Gillette's early experiences which is not so well known and which illustrates how far his desire to know men at first hand carried him. It also happened during one of his long vacations from college. At that time he was especially anxious to study men and women who were affected by different diseases and to learn how they acted in such circumstances. Accordingly, he left home, and with no warrant but his own

assurance actually hung out his shingle as a physician in a small town in Ohio. It should be said in his favor, however, that he did not unduly trifle with the health of his patients. The only medicine he ever gave was bread pills, and when people seemed to be really ill he sent them to some regular practitioner for treatment. Things were going along well with the young doctor-student. He was building up something of a practice and was curing almost the average percentage of cases with his bread pills when envious rivals or the board of health got after him for practicing without a physician's license. Then his father was obliged to come to his aid, and finally, after Gillette had proved that he never gave any medicine but bread pills and had produced a number of people he had cured in that way, the case was compromised. But he went away with a

pretty extensive and comprehensive knowledge of the way sick people act and talk.

The special car on which Gillette and his company traveled last season was usually attached to the end of a regular passenger train. Down among the Indiana sand hills something happened to the coupling apparatus and the special car broke loose from the train. The rest of the train got a quarter of a mile away before the absence of the special was noticed. Then it backed up and an attempt was made to replace the coupling. But part of the coupling apparatus was broken and the pin itself was lost. The flagman and the brakeman made a fruitless search to find something to take its place. Finally one of them was sent back to the nearest station, several miles to the rear, to get something for that purpose. Meanwhile, Gillette had become aroused. As the brakeman walked

away on his long errand, Gillette came out on the rear platform, and, with true Sherlock Holmes omniscience, reached up on the roof of the special car and took down a duplicate of the missing part.

"I happened to see it lying up there this afternoon," he said. And the trainmen are all wishing they could have a Sherlock aboard all the time in case of emergencies.

The great ambition of Mr. Gillette is to make a memorable success of his coming production of "Hamlet."

The scenery, costumes, and properties for "Hamlet" are almost all under way, and many of them have been completed, though if Mr. Gillette has any surprises in store he is keeping them a careful secret. Practically none of the people who will take part in the production have been engaged. Rarely, if ever, can Gillette be persuaded to play a longer season than twenty-five

weeks. He is not physically an especially strong man, and finds it necessary to take great care of his health and not to overwork.

DUSE, THE MYSTERIOUS.

ELENORA DUSE, the famous Italian actress, is one of the mysteries of the stage. She shuns publicity—and gets as much of it as any actress in the world. She refuses herself to interviewers—and sends ahead of her one of the most accomplished press agents in the business. She declares that the public has no concern with her life off the stage—and the newspapers are full of stories of her early struggles as a barefooted, wandering child actress in the villages of Italy, and of her more recent experiences with the tender passion. She owns a splendid collection of jewels—and wears no jewelry on or off the stage. She is said to loathe her art—and managers fight for contracts with her for years to come. She declares ambition is a grisly phantom—and her own ambition has led her to take more than one

sensational revenge on those who have slighted her.

Is it all a pose? Does the Italian tragedienne wrap herself in a mantle of mystery and put the redoubtable Mme. Schmidt on guard at her door because she knows that attitude will only whet the public curiosity? Even her managers do not profess to know. They are amply satisfied with the result. And they point out that she must be given credit for entire consistency in her attitude towards the public outside of the theater. She goes so far as to pay absolutely no attention to anything that may be printed about her private life. She will not even take the trouble to deny a story which, on its face, is not plausible. Her pose is one of complete indifference. So the guileless press agent may print what he pleases without fear that his star will find fault or deny it. The playbills say that Duse is thirty-two

years old. As a matter of fact she is at least thirty-six. She has been on the stage a quarter of a century, beginning when she was twelve years old. She was born in a little Italian village, Vigerano, in northern Italy, on the border line between Piedmont and Lombardy. Luigi Duse, her grandfather, was an obscure Italian actor, who played a line of small legitimate parts in the minor Italian cities. Her father was known on the peninsula as "Sor" Duse, and is best remembered as once having established an unsuccessful theater at Padua. In her infancy her parents were members of several different bands of "strolling players." They wandered through Italy, and played as chance would have it—in inn yards, restaurants, sheds, anywhere.

Here is a story which throws some light on her childhood: Duse was playing in Vienna. Already she

was famous. She had refused many invitations to social entertainments in her honor. Finally one came from an Italian nobleman connected with the Italian embassy to Austria. For once Duse broke her rule and accepted it. At the reception all the guests save one came forward to do homage to the actress. The exception was a young girl, who stood apart and watched Duse with eager eyes. Finally she approached and timidly touched Signora Dŭse's hand. The actress questioned the girl and learned that she was the daughter of her host.

On the following Tuesday about midnight, when Signora Duse was about to retire, a servant knocked at her door. "A lady to see the signora," the servant announced.

"Her name?"

"She refuses to give it."

"What does she seem to be?"

"I cannot say, signora. She is closely veiled."

Signora Duse ordered the caller to be shown in. A black robed figure entered the room. The servant retired. Then the caller threw aside her veil and the daughter of the diplomat knelt at the feet of the actress.

"My poor child," said Duse, as she raised her to her feet. "What is the matter?"

"The girl told her why she had come. Her home was happy. But she yearned to be famous. She wanted to be a great actress.

"Take me with you," pleaded the girl.

"That is impossible," answered Duse.

"Then I shall kill myself."

Duse led the excited child to a seat.

"Once," said the actress, "there was a poor girl—so poor that she was always barefooted and often went the whole day without food. But she felt a spirit stirring within

her—which kept crying out to her, 'Courage!'

"In summer and winter, in plenty and in starvation, she heard the voice crying: 'Courage! You will be great.'

"Years went by—years of privation and suffering, and awful toil. Then the skies grew clearer. The girl's name got into the mouths of men. It spread until all Italy took it up. She was petted and caressed. She was truly great."

"How beautiful," cried the girl.

"Beautiful," replied the actress. "My child, that woman sits before you. She would give all her greatness to be a happy child like you."

"But fame is happiness," cried the girl.

"Fame is a phantom," said the actress. "You are far happier than I can ever hope to be."

The girl wept, and Duse, calling her carriage, drove her back to her home.

Three nights later, in Berlin, a courier handed a letter to Signora Duse. It contained a letter:

"Signor: My daughter has no secrets from me. I know all and bless you. I send you a token, priceless in itself, doubly priceless now; a token that a Medici is henceforth a father to you."

The letter was unsigned, but Duse knew from whom it came. It contained a gold band ring, set with six opals in the form of a double oval. That ring has never left the finger of Duse since that time.

That is a sample of what the free and untrammeled press agent can do. Duse will never either deny or affirm it. And the doubter has only to look at the ring, as he will see it on the finger of the actress.

Schurman, Duse's present manager, was once manager for Sarah Bernhardt. He has had the management of the Italian tragedienne for the last two years.

"Last winter," says Mr. Schurman, "Duse was playing at Stuttgart. William II, king of Wurtemburg, was one of the enthusiastic spectators in the audience. The play was 'Magda,' and after the third act the monarch sent for Signora Duse's impresario.

"'You will tell Mme. Duse,' said the king, graciously, 'that I am profoundly impressed by her performance. I shall give myself the honor of visiting her in her dressing room immediately.'"

Schurman, who has a French manner a Prussian beard, expressed his thanks and hurried back to his star's dressing room to give her warning. He nervously conveyed through the keyhole the royal compliments and the further intelligence that the actress was to be honored by a visit from the king.

"You tell his majesty," she said to her manager, opening the door of her dressing room and appear-

ing fully dressed, "that I am grateful for his compliment and flattered by his attention. But tell him I feel just as much honored by hearing it from you. Tell him I cannot see him because I am dressing."

Then the king was heard approaching. Before her manager had finished whispering the fact to Duse the door of her dressing room was closed. The important fact that his majesty was waiting was communicated through the keyhole. The answer came back from Duse that she was dressing and could see nobody.

"Then I'll wait," answered the Suabian ruler, blandly.

"If you do, you'll have to wait outside as long as I stay inside, your majesty," was Duse's answer, as her manager reports it, "for I shall not come out while you are there."

The king held the curtain for half an hour in vain. Then he went

ELENORA DUSE.

SEE PAGE 72

sadly back to the royal box. And Duse had won a new fame as the only actress who ever gave a ruling monarch the snub direct.

Duse has signed contracts to appear in this country next year. She is beginning to show considerable interest in the United States. So far on this trip she has not slapped a persistent interviewer, which is an indication that she is getting used to American methods. It is said of her that she has a long memory. More than one manager who slighted her in the days of her struggles has come to her since, hat in hand, and done his best to get a contract. But she does not forget, and to not one of those who once frowned on her early efforts has the signora ever given a hearing.

WILLIAM H. CRANE TELLS STAGE STORIES.

"I WAS about to suggest, Mr. Crane, that—"

"That reminds me of a little interchange of courtesies which took place between Barry Sullivan, the great English actor, and Manager Buckley, of the Baldwin theater in San Francisco, on the opening of that house by Sullivan's company. I was a member of the company and was standing on the stage the afternoon before the opening, when the dialogue between the two occurred. Buckley was a pompous and conceited man, and Sullivan took a great dislike to him from the start.

"'This,' said Buckley, looking around the beautiful house and speaking in a most patronizing manner, 'is the third theater I have opened.' Then he stopped and looked at Sullivan to see what effect

the announcement would have on him. But Sullivan looked him straight in the eyes.

"'Indeed, sir,' said Sullivan, 'and how many have you closed?'"

"Mr. Crane, will you—"

"Tell you about 'Jimmy' Powers? Why, I called on 'Jimmy' one afternoon and asked him to go over town with me to a rehearsal or something.

"'Can't,' said 'Jimmy.' 'I'm sorry, but I've got to take a singing lesson this afternoon.'

"'What with, Jimmy?' I asked, and he didn't speak to me for six months."

"And, Mr. Crane—"

"Yes. Hogue's barber shop in the old days was patronized by all the big politicians and heavy weight financiers in New York. One morning Lawrence Barrett walked in there for a shave.

"Finally a chair was vacated by a fine looking old man, and Barrett

slipped in. The barber was one of those talkative chaps that keep their tongues running faster than their razors.

"'Did you notice that gentleman who just got out of my chair?' he asked, as he tucked a towel about the great Barrett's neck.

"'Yes, I noticed him,' said the tragedian, in a deep bass voice, 'and I'm in a great hurry this morning.'

"'Yes, sir,' went on the barber. 'All right, sir. As I was saying, it's a funny thing about that gentleman. The minute I put my hands on his head, I said to him, "Excuse me, sir. Aren't you in the law, sir?" "Yes," he said, "I'm in the law." "High up in the law, sir?" "I'm Justice Brown, of the Supreme Court of the United States," he said. 'Well, sir, I don't know how it is,' went on the barber, 'just a gift I have, I suppose, but the minute I lay hands on a man's head I can tell his occu-

pation. Only yesterday I picked out the governor of Connecticut that way and—'

"By this time Barrett was getting a little interested.

"'Perhaps,' said the great tragedian, 'perhaps you can tell me my profession?'

"'Just a minute, sir,' said the barber, 'just a minute.'

"Rapidly he ran his hands over Barretts's Jovian locks and across his splendid forehead. Then he leaned over with a confident grin.

"'Shoe store,' he said.

"Now, Mr. Crane, about—"

"Well, in the old days of the Hooley stock company, in Chicago, of which I was a member, there was a young actor came along whose stage name was William H. Wilding. He had had a good commercial training before he started in with us to become an actor, and sometimes he used to ask me for advice. He played the court clerk

in the trial scene in the 'Merchant of Venice' and that sort of small parts. I told him I often thought him foolish to give up business, in which he had a fair start, for such an uncertain thing as the career of an actor.

"'To be frank with you,' I said to him one night, 'I don't think you are fitted to become a great actor. You seem to lack the dramatic instinct, and without it you won't go far. My candid advice to you is to go back into business and to stick to it.'

"The next day Wilding went out and hustled for a job in a store. He got a clerkship which paid him $15 a week. He had been getting $25 in the stock company, but he gave that up at once and went into vulgar trade. When he left the stage he gave up also his stage name of William H. Wilding and took his own name of John K. Mockett.

"The other day I stopped over in Toledo, O., for a few hours, and went up to call on Mockett. He is now the owner of the largest and most successful clothing and furnishing store in Toledo, and one of the largest in the State. The name of Mockett is well known in trade circles. And whenever I see the man whom I put out of the theatrical business he renews his thanks for my part in the change, which he has never regretted since he made it."

"Mr. Crane, David—"

"That was one man I helped to get out of the show business. Frank—Francis—Wilson is one whom I advised to stick to it and to leave black face for something more legitimate. When I first met Wilson he was playing in a black face sketch called 'Wash Day,' with his partner, the firm being Cronin & Wilson. But even then Frank Wilson was an energetic and am-

bitious man. In his leisure time, when most actors would have been idling, or worse, he was studying French, German, and the law. He and I had a good many talks, and I advised him to try legitimate comedy parts. So he gave up $75 a week in negro minstrelsy and took a position with the Chestnut Street theater, in Philadelphia, to play second comedy parts in the stock company at $25 a week. Then McCall came along and put him into light opera, where he has been ever since."

"_____."

"Well, here's a letter from an Iowa man who would like to know if I shouldn't love to be playing Shakespeare's 'Two Dromios' again with Stuart Robson. I should think not. Why, all the time I was on the stage I was bound foot, hand, and tongue. If Robson had a cold in his head I had to have a cold in mine. If Robson had a felon on

the little finger of his right hand it was necessary for me to rig one up. If he got the rheumatism and had to wrap up his knee in a red flannel bandage I had to do the same. It was dreadful. I had to think of Robson's other things all the time. Sometimes I'd get all made up and ready to go. Then I'd drop into Rob's dressing room for a minute and observe that he had put a little more red paint than usual on his cheeks and nose. Then I had to hurry back to do the same thing. It was a dreadful experience."

"————."

"Yes, Harum seems to be going finely again this year. Some of the critics say it is likely to be a second 'Rip Van Winkle.' I shouldn't object to that. But I have produced more new plays than any actor now on the stage. Getting a good play is harder every year. Some time ago a well known dra-

matist read me a scenario that told a beautiful story. It was just what I wanted. I accepted it and ordered the play, paying him $2,500 as advance money. A month later he brought me around the first act to read. It was based on an entirely different scenario, and I told him so.

"'Why, this isn't on the lines of the scenario you showed me,' I said.

"'No, I know it,' he said, 'but it's a great deal better.'

"I didn't like it at all. A week later he called again. This time he wanted to borrow $50. I let him have it, of course, and he left a receipt for it. This is the way the receipt read, as I discovered after he had left:

"'Received of W. H. Crane $50, to be repaid out of the first royalties received on the play I am writing for him.' That's the last I have ever heard from him. I

suppose he simply needed the $2,-500 in his business."

Mr. Crane's dresser handed him a realistic rubber mole, which he proceeded to paste on to the grizzled and wrinkled cheek of David Harum.

"The last boy I had is in state's prison now. Stole $1,800 and ran away. But that didn't hurt so much as what I learned afterwards. It seems the boy had been spending my money and my clothes and raising merry Cain in half the towns we visited.

"'Aren't you afraid that Mr. Crane'll find you out?" some one asked him.

"'No,' he said. 'You can't fool Mrs. Crane. But Crane—why, Crane's easy.'

"And that really did hurt."

A CHICAGO TRAGEDY OF HAMLET.

ON the closing day of his last engagement in Chicaga in "Lazarre," Otis Skinner played to a matinee "of $1,-618," as the box office puts it. In the evening the receipts were even larger. But the time is not far distant when Mr. Skinner was glad to take in as much in a week as his average daily receipts are at present.

In January, 1896, for instance, the Skinner company, then, as now, under the management of Joseph Buckley, was playing the little towns along the Ohio river in Kentucky in a round of romantic dramas. It kept Buckley fairly busy in those days to meet the pay roll and provide sufficient funds to buy railroad tickets from one little town to another.

It happened that in January, 1896, Chicago was enjoying a per-

fect epidemic of Shakespeare's "Hamlet." For the week of January 26th Walker Whiteside was announced to present the great tragedy at the Schiller. The next week Creston Clarke was to present the melancholy Dane at McVicker's. Within a few weeks the famous Italian actor, Salvini, the younger, was underlined in the same play at the Schiller.

For the week of January 26th at the Grand opera house it had been announced that Mme. Modjeska would appear. But a day or two before her opening Modjeska fell ill and was obliged to telegraph Manager Hamlin, of the Grand, canceling her engagement.

Mr. Hamlin immediately canvassed the list of available attractions to fill in the vacant two weeks. Finally it occurred to him that Otis Skinner would be a drawing card. He got into communication with Mr. Buckley at Padu-

cah, Ky., and offered the Skinner company a good thing if it would cancel its time in Kentucky and come up to Chicago for the fortnight.

"Yes," said Mr. Buckley, somewhat embarrassed at the situation which confronted him, "we would like to come to Chicago first class, but it is several hundred miles distant from Paducah."

Which was Mr. Buckley's delicate way of hinting that he did not have the ready money to buy the necessary railroad tickets. That essential matter was arranged by Mr. Hamlin's advancing the funds by telegraph, and Otis Skinner and his fellow players took the first train for Chicago.

At the time everybody in the theatrical line in the city was talking about the Hamlet craze. Walker Whiteside opened at the Schiller in the Shakespearean play and all the critics said it was "a creditable

production," which is their way of avoiding the saying of something worse. At any rate, the Whiteside production represented the investment of a large sum of money. The scenery and the costumes were fine, and the lines were given "a thoughtful and intelligent reading."

Skinner opened at the Grand in one of his stock plays to only fair business. That night Mr. Hamlin asked him if he had ever played Hamlet.

Yes, he had played Hamlet once, before the students of the University of Wisconsin. But he had no costumes, no scenery, no properties.

Well, play it again, here and now. Never mind scenery or costumes or other incidentals. Do the best you can. The people want "Hamlet." We must give it to them.

Forthwith began the greatest hustle on record for scenery and costumes which could be forced into

service. For the graveyard scene the only thing that could be found was a back drop which had been left behind by a company playing "The Texas Steer." It was a garden scene with a statue of U. S. Grant in the center. Of course, it was necessary to cover up that statue, so a group of stage trees was arranged in front of it, which hid the monument from everybody except the people in the left hand boxes and those who occupied seats on that side of the house.

A costume for Hamlet was found at the shop of a local dealer who makes a specialty of supplying the wants of masqueraders. All sorts of similar shifts were turned and, finally, a day or two later, the first performance of "Hamlet" by "the eminent Shakespearean actor, Otis Skinner," was announced.

The night of the first improvised performance the house was fairly filled. But the critics went almost

KYRLE BELLEW AND MRS. JAMES BROWN POTTER.

SEE PAGE 113

into ecstasies over Skinner's reading of the lines, and everybody who had been present must have talked to his friends about the superlative merit of the performance. The second night of "Hamlet" every seat was filled. The praise grew stronger. "The greatest Hamlet since Booth has been discovered," said the critics, all in one breath. Meanwhile the astonished success of Skinner had had a bad effect on the attendance at the Schiller. After three nights of "Hamlet," Walker Whiteside gave it up and turned to other plays in his repertoire, in which the comparison was not so strong.

Skinner turned into the second week with the Sunday papers full of his remarkable performance. Public interest was heightened by the announcement in the same issues that Creston Clarke would open that week at McVicker's in "Hamlet," the inference being that now

the theater-going people of Chicago would see the "real thing" in the line of Shakespeare. Clarke's good angel had provided him with sufficient funds to make an elaborate production and plenty of scenery and costumes had been arranged for. It was a case of "wait for the big show."

But Clarke did not "make good." His engagement at McVicker's was for two weeks, but at the end of the first seven days the remainder of the time was canceled, and Clarke disappeared, for the time at least, from metropolitan theaters.

Meanwhile, the crowds and the enthusiasm aroused by the Skinner portrayal increased. When he put on something else the audiences at the Grand were not so large, but every performance of "Hamlet" packed the house. It was a sufficient answer for all time to the claim that people do "not care for Shakespeare."

Finally, after the other three Hamlets had closed their engagements, but while the excitement engendered by the rivalry was still fresh in the public mind, along came the great Salvini the younger. He was jealous of the fame won by Skinner in the part of Hamlet, or, at least, he was determined that he would surpass it.

On Monday night he opened to a big house at the Schiller in the great tragic part. On Tuesday night the audience was much smaller. On Wednesday evening, with "Hamlet" still the bill, there was a beggarly house. Salvini's manager overrode the entreaties of his star and took "Hamlet" off for the rest of the engagement, substituting other plays in the Italian's repertoire.

Salvini was broken hearted. He fought the determination to withdraw "Hamlet" as bitterly as he could, and it was only after an

almost pathetic scene between him and his manager that the determination was arrived at. After that, and during the remainder of his engagement, Salvini's acting seemed to lack its accustomed fire and spirit. He took the success of Skinner in the one part he wanted to play most keenly to heart. He could talk of nothing else. In talking over the matter with Mr. Buckley he actually broke down and wept bitterly, raving against the theater-going people of Chicago, denouncing the critics, and speaking bitterly of the action of his own manager.

But there was nothing to be done about it. The test had been made, and, under the most difficult and embarrassing circumstances. Skinner had won the verdict. Salvini left Chicago a thoroughly crushed and disappointed man.

Not long after his Chicago experience Salvini gave up his career in

America and went back to the home of his father in Italy. He never seemed to fully recover his ambition and spirit, and within a few months after reaching his old home he died of an obscure disease.

As for Skinner, Mr. Buckley, his manager, made an effort to interest rich men in an undertaking to send his star out in a splendid revival of "Hamlet," but he failed to get the money and, though the tragedy was produced during that season on the road and with almost unfailing success, it was never especially featured.

So, by what was a mere chance of the theatrical business, one famous actor was sent home broken hearted, to die soon after, while the rising stars of two other young tragedians were apparently permamanently obscured. And this by a man who played "Hamlet" before scenery stolen from "A Texas Steer," and who wore a costume

rented by the week from the shop of a dealer in ready-made disguises for masqueraders.

THE MAKING OF AN OPERA STAR.

A GOOD many years ago, when "Tom" Prior was running a comic opera company at the old Schiller theater, in Chicago, a young girl came up to the city from a hamlet on the banks of the Wabash in Indiana. Her father was a church deacon in the Indiana village and his daughter came up to Chicago to study music. She brought with her, as chief assets, a lot of ambition and an extremely promising voice.

This was some time before the Indiana artistic and literary movement set in, and the Hoosier with soulful longings was naturally looked upon with some degree of suspicion. But when Manager Prior heard the girl sing—her real name was Gracie Quivey—he engaged her to sing in the chorus of "The Black Hussar." So she wrote home that she was getting along finely; that

she already had secured a permanent position which would pay her expenses while she was studying music—though, to be sure, she did not go into details as to just what her position was.

It may be that Papa Quivey took it for granted that his daughter was singing in a church choir, though certainly his little girl never willfully deceived him in this regard. When Gracie went on the stage she followed tradition and made a slight change in her ancestral Scotch name. She left off the terminal "y" and became for artistic purposes Miss Gracia Quive, which certainly sounds comic opery.

Inside of two weeks she had advanced in her profession to the front row. Then two important things happened. The first in point of time was a visit paid to the Schiller theater by a casual wayfarer from Miss Quive's home town in Indiana. As is customary with

visitors from the rural districts, he sat as far down in front as was humanly possible. When the jaunty chorus came swinging out on to the stage the gentleman from Indiana gave one look at the front row and almost had a fit. There in extremely abbreviated skirts stood little Gracie Quivey, whom he had often taken to sleighing parties and barn dances in the old home town. Right after the first act the Hoosier made his escape and caught a train for home. He had a piece of news that was altogether too good to keep. He knew something that would set the village gossips afire. Before breakfast next morning he went over to tell his next door neighbor, and his wife started out, without stopping to wash the breakfast dishes, to spread the glad tidings.

"'Si' was up there to Chicago and went to one of them opry shows and seen Deacon Quivey's Grace

standing right out onto the stage with pink tights on."

Before noon "Pa" Quivey himself had heard of it, and, horrified and scandalized at the thought, he hurried to Chicago on the first train.

Then fate stepped in again. The day that "Pa" Quivey arrived in town the prima donna of the opera company suddenly made up her imperious mind that she was going back to New York, and, without stopping to do more than draw a week's salary in advance, she jumped on board a train.

Manager Prior heard of his star's desertion along in the middle of the afternoon. He was in despair. He called the company together and canvassed its members for a possible substitute, there being no regular understudy for the prima donna.

It developed that Gracia Quive was the only woman in the cast who was at all familiar with the songs and music of the leading

role. But she did not know the words of the spoken dialogue. Prior was desperate, for he had had a good advance sale.

"Well," he said, "you'll have to go on, Miss Quive, and do the best you can with the part. I'll put a man with a prompt book on each side of the stage and you'll have to wing the part so far as the words go."

As aforesaid, Miss Quive was even then an extremely ambitious young person, and she determined to do her best to make a hit in the star role, or at least to play it so well that she would be kept in the part. She sat down in the stage at once and studied straight ahead until time for the evening performance, without even stopping to eat dinner. An hour before the curtain her old father found his way back to the stage door and finally got in to see his daughter. He was furious at the humiliation he con-

sidered his daughter had cast upon him and absolutely refused to allow her to go on the stage again.

But Manager Prior finally succeeded in persuading him to let her go on for that night only. As might have been expected, Miss Quive was badly rattled when she made her appearance. She knew nothing of the lines, in the first place; she was jumping straight from the chorus to a star part; and, last of all, he angry old father, of whom she was dreadfully afraid, was waiting to take her home.

Will J. Davis, the well known manager, happened to occupy a stage box that night. He saw plainly that the new star was having a hard time of it. He heard the prompters bawling at her from both sides of the stage. But he was at the same time struck with the quality of her voice, and he made a note of her name for future reference.

Next morning early her father took her back home to Indiana, and Miss Gracia Quive's retirement from the stage appeared to be complete.

Six months later a well known vocal teacher called on Mr. Davis to interest him in the education and future of a young woman singer. Gracia Quivey—with the "y" back again in its place—was her name. Mr. Davis remembered, and presently he was able to get her a place to sing in a church choir out at Oak Park. There she sang on Sundays all the time she was having her voice trained during the week.

Perhaps a year later the Bostonians were going to try voices in New York. The idea was to get some fresh, new voices of promise in their chorus. Miss Quive went down with a note of introduction from Mr. Davis. Out of forty voices heard on that occasion hers was the only

one that passed the critical examination, and a little later Miss Quive joined the Bostonians. She made rapid progess in the company and seemed well on the way to the top, when something else happened.

Dr. Van Studdiford, of St. Louis, a young man of wealth and social position, fell in love with the singer and persuaded her to leave the stage and become his wife. Then followed a few years of retirement from professional life, during which Mrs. Van Studdiford enjoyed all the advantages which money could give her.

Then came financial disaster and in a few months most of the Van Studdiford money had completely vanished. But Mrs. Van Studdiford still had her voice, and her ambition to make a notable place for herself on the operatic stage had only grown stronger during her retirement. She found a good position at once and without difficulty.

For a few months she was with an opera company, which she left because other members of the company found fault when her friends in St. Louis sent quantities of flowers over the footlights to her when a St. Louis date was played. Part of one season she was under engagement with the Castle Square opera company, though illness kept her to her room for months and prevented her from appearing until the season was almost over.

Mrs. Van Studdiford has taken a whirl around the vaudeville circle in company with some of her old colleagues in the Bostonians. She played the round of the continuous houses in Chicago and went through to the coast on the Orpheum circuit.

Last season she was back again with the reorganized Bostonians.

They say that before a singer or a musician of any kind can show true feeling in his work he must

have known most of the deeper emotions to which humanity is heir, and those who have heard Mrs. Van Studdiford sing since she returned to the stage profess to find in her voice the softening and broadening effects of her more recent experiences.

She has recently signed a contract with a prominent manager by the terms of which she will appear this year as a star at the head of an opera company of her own. She will make her debut in a stellar role in a new opera, for which Victor Herbert, who has made something of a study of Mrs. Van Studdiford's capabilities, is now writing the music.

MRS. VAN STUDDIFORD.

SEE PAGE 103.

THE HANDSOMEST MAN ON THE STAGE.

KYRLE BELLEW, who is illustrating the way in which a gentleman of France runs a dozen villains through with his trusty rapier before breakfast, has been more different things in the course of his career than the most versatile of his contemporaries.

It is a question whether he is better known as an actor or a gold mine owner and mining engineer. Besides he has been a sign painter, a sailor before the mast, an Australian "sundowner" or tramp, and a dime museum lecturer. Just now he has blossomed out as an author. His book—"Stray Stories of a Stage Nomad"—has already been published in London, and is shortly to be issued by the Appletons in this country. And in this book Mr. Bellew tells such tales of his own

experiences that his friends in the theatrical business are urging him to dramatize his own life the next time he is at a loss for a romantic and sensational drama. To this proposition Mr. Bellew objects on the grounds that the public is tired of lurid melodrama, and that everybody would say that it was too improbable, anyway.

When Bellew was in London the last time a woman brought him her autograph book to write in. He turned the pages till he came to the leaf on which H. Beerbohm Tree had left his mark.

"'Tis I—Hamlet, the Dane—H. Beerbohm Tree," was what the English actor had written. Bellew took his pen and wrote on the same page and immediately beneath Mr. Tree's contribution another quotation. "'Tis true, 'tis pity; and pity 'tis true—Kyrle Bellew," was the sarcastic inscription; which is a fairly typical example of how much

actors love one another. Mr. Bellew's first experience in the Australian gold fields was a good many years ago. He had made considerable progress and was in a fair way to become a mining millionaire when suddenly the experimental government of the antipodes passed a law declaring that thereafter it should not be lawful to employ the labor of the black natives of the islands in mines of any kind. That put Bellew out of business almost at a sweep. He struggled along until his money was all gone. Then he turned the water into his mines, flooded them, and set out to find something to do. He had hard work finding it—such hard work that he finally became what the Australians call a "sundowner," which is the same thing as a tramp in this country. He "panhandled" his way through the scrub, begging for food at the back doors of ranch houses, until he finally struck Mel-

bourne. There he made the rounds looking for work. Finally the landlord of a little tavern expressed a mild desire to have a sign painted on the front of his inn, and Bellew, by declaring that he was an artist by trade, got the job. He painted a huge white lion all across the front of the hotel, and it made such a hit with landlord and guests alike that ever since then "The White Lion" has been a favorite title for Australian inns. For some weeks Bellew did a rushing business in the painting of white lions, and when he had finally plastered the fronts of a majority of the houses of entertainment in the vicinity with the insignia he turned to something else.

First he visited the local wax works' show and there, by an exhibition of great fluency and eloquence, obtained a situation as official lecturer. A little later he was wandering along the docks one

day when some one asked if he knew anything about boats.

"Boats," replied Bellew. "Why, I'm a sailor by trade."

As a matter of fact, he had sailed before the mast for several years, and he did know a great deal about the subject. So he was employed, in company with another "sundowner" to build a flat bottom boat. It is one of Mr. Bellew's boasts that the boat was so well built that it is still running on the waters of an Australian stream.

But the question of how to get back to England was still staring Bellew in the face. It was solved when, after long searching, he got a berth as third mate on a sailing ship that was bound for Liverpool. It was on his return to his motherland that Mr. Bellew first went on the stage. He spent five years on the stage in London—part of the time with Sir Henry Irving—and then he came over to serve as lead-

ing man in a New York theater. His original contract was for one year, but he made such a hit that it was five years before he was released.

Then began his connection with Cora Potter—Mrs. James Brown Potter—which lasted for more than ten years, and during the course of which the two traveled, with their company, to almost every corner of the civilized world.

Mr. Bellew's last appearance in this country, before the present engagement, was seven or eight years ago, when he and Mrs. Potter and their company presented "Charlotte Corday" and other plays in Chicago and through the "States."

Three or four times Bellew has gone back and had a try at the gold mines, near Maytown, which he still owns in partnership with Frank Gardner, the famous Anglo-American mining millionaire, who has

for many years lived in London and Paris. Enough has been done in the development of the mines to demonstrate to the satisfaction of the owners that they have a huge fortune waiting for them to dig it out of the earth. Only the other day Mr. Bellew received word from Gardner that the stock of a company which has been organized to develop three of their Maytown mines has been floated on the London market and almost any time Bellew is expecting to wake up and find himself a multi-millionaire.

All these years, while he has been appearing on the stage, Mr. Bellew has kept up an active interest as a mining engineer from the New Zealand School of Mines, which is recognized as one of the best institutions of its kind in the world. During his recent stay in New York Mr. Bellew lectured before the students at the school of mines connected with Columbia

University, which he regards as the finest school of its kind in the world, and it is anticipated that before long he will take the examinations for the degree of M. E. from the New York school. High as are his abilities as an actor it is admitted that he could earn a splendid living as a mining expert at any time.

His partner, Frank Gardner, is an American by birth, and has made millions out of mines in both Australia and South Africa.

How old is Kyrle Bellew?

The World Almanac says he was born in London in 1845, which would make him now 58 years old. Mr. Bellew himself, it is understood, confesses to 48. Some of his friends are willing to raise the ante to 51.

At any rate no one seeing him on the stage would imagine that he was on the shady side of 40. And he still retains to a large degree

that handsome profile and distinguished bearing which have made for him for at least twenty years one of the most prominent of the great army of matinee idols.

As a matter of fact, Mr. Bellew is at present a reformed matinee idol, if he was ever anything else. Women, young and beautiful, still send him notes and locks of their hair. Sometimes they actually follow him about the country from city to city. But it is all in vain. He has no answering smile for any of the fair ones. Apparently he is devoted to the memory or to the affection of some mysterious and unknown lady.

Personally, his habits are exemplary. He is in bed half an hour after the last curtain falls on the "Gentleman of France." He does not drink, nor even smoke. Which is one reason why, whatever his age may be, he still looks like a man of 35.

Born in London, the son of a priest of the church of England, Kyrle Bellew was educated at Oxford. After the death of his father his mother married Lord Elgin, who was later the viceroy of India, which explains why, when Bellew and Mrs. Potter went to India on their trip around the world, they were received in the highest circles and made a tremendous success, financially and otherwise. And now, at the conclusion of his present contract to appear as a star for three years, he expects to settle down as an Australian mining millionaire in the great city of his birth.

HOW DAVID BELASCO WORKS AND LIVES.

"LOW life may inspire high art." "You must scratch your way through a mountain to success." "Literature is easy; life is hard."

"There is nothing so complicated as simplicity."

"When as a boy of ten years I recited 'Curfew Shall Not Ring To-night' I saw in my mind's eye Mrs. Carter playing 'The Heart of Maryland.'"

"The first money I ever made I made by selling badges of General Grant on the streets. With that $18 I bought two stage wigs. The playwright is born, not made."

"You must feel before you can philosophize."

"Nobody can write a book on playwriting that is worth reading."

"The death agonies of a person poisoned by strychnine are different

from those produced by arsenic. I am afraid of death, but have studied them both from life."

"When I write a play I live a play."

With two soft boiled eggs, timed to three minutes, a pot of breakfast tea, and some toast before him, David Belasco sat at a little table in his room, attired in pale blue pajamas, and said: "Really, I'm a poor talker."

Then he proceeded in the course of twenty minutes' talk to give expression to some scores of epigrams, of which those quoted above are samples, as the traveling man says.

After getting his star well started, he left for New York. But nobody with one of Belasco's attractions knows when he'll get back.

As likely as not he will come back unannounced. Without saying a word to any one, he will slip into the theater at the evening per-

formance and watch the whole show to see whether everybody is keeping up to the mark. If there is any "let down" a rehearsal will be called, and the "governor" will bring the people who have begun to slight their work to a realizing sense of what he wants. If, on the occasion of one of these unexpected visits, he finds everything going just as he likes he may take the morning train back to New York, and nobody will be the wiser for his visit.

"I believe first of all in simplicity. Rounded periods are all very well in books, but you don't often find them in real life. What a person will do under a certain set of circumstances depends altogether on the person.

"You can tell one man suddenly that his mother or his wife is dead, and he will break out into sobs, tear his hair, and act like a madman. You bring the same message

to another man, and he will stiffen himself, keep perfectly quiet, and only show his emotion by lowering his voice and clenching his fists.

"Repose may be high art; so may hysteria. It depends on the temperament of the character you are portraying. Either may be false; either may be true. Some people have an idea that the highest art is always reposeful and quiet. They are wrong. It would be as untrue as unartistic to make some characters self-controlled and silent as it would be to represent a noiseless thunder storm or an immovable earthquake.

"Before I had enough money to hire a stenographer I used to write the dialogues of my plays seated before a mirror. On the desk before me I had a pad of paper and pencil. First I was one of the characters and then another, and what I felt I wrote down, using a kind of shorthand, so that my hand

might keep up with my changing feelings.

"All art is the better for being felt before it is expressed. No woman, for instance, can play the part of a mother on the stage with the highest art of which she is capable until she has actually been a mother and experienced the emotions she attempts to portray.

"Now I have a couple of stenographers when I am working on a play, but I must always act the play as I go along. I get the first idea for a play in many different ways. I have trained myself to observe men and women. Sometime I see something which contains the germ of a play; sometimes I read something in the newspapers which appeals to me; sometimes it is a bit of history which strikes me; often I find myself going back to some experience of my boyhood days. I was an adventuresome and curious boy. I was always peering

into forbidden places. I ran away with a circus; I visited a gambling house; I went to the morgue; I hung around police stations. Now I see the unconscious reason for it all. I was gathering material for the plays I was to write.

"Believe me, there is no such thing as a method of playwriting. One must live and then put what he has lived into the mouths of his actors.

"Often the theater-going public is made to suffer for the sins or for the shortcomings of theatrical managers. There is no such thing as a public craze for a certain kind of theatrical entertainment. A good, a first-class, true production of any kind or type is always sure of its hearing. It is most often managerial or dramatic inability which hides the cheap excuse of a public craze. The sincere and able artist, be he tragedian or what not, may always be sure of his hearing and of success.

PRINTED BY COMMERCIAL PRINTING CO.
100 EIGHTH STREET, CAIRO, ILL.

PN
2065
H9

THE LIBRARY
UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA
Santa Barbara

THIS BOOK IS DUE ON THE LAST
STAMPED BELOW.

3 1205 02382 2685

UC SOUTHERN REGIONAL LIBRARY FACILITY

AA 001 075 264 0

THROUGH THE STAGE DOOR

BY

H·M·HYDE